

Review from *Mathematical Reviews Clippings*

January 2013 MR2895061

www.ams.org/mr-database

Knots unravelled

Arbelos

£12.00 + delivery

There are a variety of knot theory books, and textbooks, on the market. This book, *Knots unravelled: from string to mathematics*, does seem to fit in a unique place. The book is well suited for the interested layperson, or even for interested schoolchildren (the preface suggests from ages 12 or 13). Not only does it avoid equations, but even arithmetic appears to be avoided until the final fifteen pages (which is naturally necessary for a discussion of knot polynomials). The very impressive feat is that this gentle treatment still manages to be quite precise. It is fun to read the book as a professional and see how the authors delicately balance between accuracy and sophistication. After having read this book, it may be my new favourite for introducing knot theory to non-mathematicians.

Aside from typical topics, there are also attractive “interludes” into the more artistic topics of: knots tied out of paper, Celtic knots, necktie knots, the figure eight, hunter’s bend, torus knots, and a curious trefoil which does not sit on three points.

This book is probably too cautious to use as an undergraduate text, but would be ideal for school use or for a careful introduction for an audience that is wary of mathematics.

Jeff Johannes